



## NEWS RELEASE

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## **Pair Plead No Contest to Money Laundering from Catholic Nonprofits**

A former development consultant for Catholic nonprofits and his assistant have pleaded no contest to charges they stole about \$180,000 from the agencies, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Charles Thomas Sebesta, 51, of Los Angeles entered his plea yesterday to 17 counts of money laundering and two counts each of grand theft and forgery. Christine Lynn Rowe, 50, of Huntington Beach entered her plea today to 17 counts of money laundering and two counts of grand theft.

Deputy District Attorney Sandra Pena prosecuted the case.

Sebesta was hired by Lay Mission-Helpers and Mission Doctors Association to help with charity fundraising. The nonprofits issued checks totaling about \$180,000 between October 2013 and April 2014 to a business Sebesta recommended.

The checks were diverted to a bank account under the company's name that was created by Rowe, the prosecutor said. The funds were then transferred to an account that Sebesta controlled.

Sentencing is set for Sept. 27 for both defendants. Sebesta faces up to nearly 20 years in state prison, while Rowe faces a possible maximum sentence of 18 years and four months in prison.

Case BA425552 was investigated by Los Angeles Police Department's Olympic Division.

### **About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office**

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.